

DEC 5 1963

# UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

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## *The College*

DIVISION OF BIOLOGY

3 December 1963

Dr. S. Fox  
Dr. N. Horowitz  
Dr. J. Lederberg ✓  
Dr. E. Levinthal  
Dr. C. Pittendrigh  
Dr. E. Pollard  
Dr. O. Reynolds  
Dr. W. Vishniac

Gentlemen:

I think you all are aware that the NASA program for sending life detection experiments to Mars is beset with serious technical difficulties. Some funding problems also are likely to become serious in the near future. Both sorts of problems have long range budgetary and even political implications. Workable solutions will depend in large measure on support for NASA's exobiological objectives which only the scientific community can provide. Critical budgetary decisions probably will be influenced heavily by the interest shown by biologists, for that in turn influences attitudes of the press and the public and, ultimately, of Congress and the President. The support of biologists on scientific grounds of course depends on the program being adequate not only in its objectives but in its scope and cost relative to other uses of funds allocated to space research.

I think it would be helpful if we talk over these matters as a group, explore areas of concern to exobiology and to biologists, and try to identify courses of action which we can implement or support directly.

Since most of us are going to be attending the Bioscience Subcommittee meeting on the West Coast next week, that would be a good time for us to get together for an evening's discussion. Dr. Josh Lederberg is saving the evening of 12 December for this purpose and no conflicting meetings of the Subcommittee are scheduled for that evening. We shall probably meet at Rickey's, where most of us are staying, but the time and place is not yet settled. At this point, I ask you only to save the evening of the 12th for this discussion.

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Probably it will be best if we keep the session informal rather than make it a part of NASA sponsored Bioscience Subcommittee activities.

Sincerely,



Allan H. Brown, Chairman  
Life Sciences Committee, S. S. B.

P. S. Enclosed is a statement of views written by Colin Pittendrigh which may provide something for you to chew on prior to our discussion on the 12th.